

Getting Started & the Seven Steps



Read through your **Green-Schools Biodiversity Handbook** before taking action. If you have not received a copy, drop us a line, and we can email a pdf to you. The **7-Step** planning structure that you will find therein, will help the programme run smoothly at your school.

Once you have set up your **Green-Schools Committee (Step 1)**, your next step is to assess your starting point by conducting an **Environmental Review (Step 2)** (NB: be sure not to jump ahead and make any changes or take action in the school before you have established your starting point). The two main ways to measure your starting point are (1) Carry out **Awareness Surveys** with Students and Staff and (2) Create a **Habitat Map** of your campus.



Once you have measured what your school community know, and what species and habitats are present on your campus, you can start to think up ways to raise awareness about biodiversity, and also to encourage species-richness in and around your school. Once you come up with these ideas and actions, write them down as an **Action Plan (Step 3)**. Your action plan should say what your targets are and how you are going to achieve them.

It is important that you plan from the beginning how you will measure the success of your Biodiversity Action Plan. **Monitoring and Evaluating (Step 4)** improvements in your school are done by repeating the Awareness Surveys. You can investigate if physical enhancements to your school grounds made a difference to the diversity of plant and animal species by creating another Habitat Map after a given time period. You may also choose to do other surveys, such as identification surveys of common bird, trees or flowers.

Linking your work with the school curriculum is relatively easy to achieve, as biodiversity links in with so much of our day to day lives – see the Handbook for more detail on **Curriculum Links (Step 5)**.

Informing and Involving (Step 6) the wider community is similar to all previous Green-Schools themes- again suggestions and ideas can be found in the Handbook.

Finally, your **Green-Code (Step 7)** will help to keep you focused, and united in a common purpose, relevant to your school. There are a few examples in the Handbook. This step can be done at any stage in the two-year process, once your initial Environmental Review is complete.